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NEW INITIATIVES IN  
WASTE MANAGEMENT

by

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Good morning and welcome to the Ontario Waste Management Conference.

I'm standing in for Jim Bradley, who regrets he cannot be here. Jim is accompanying Premier Peterson to Montréal where they will be signing several agreements with Quebec later today.

It's a bit of a shock to realize that this event is 35 years old today. In past years we called it the Ontario Industrial Waste Conference, but that's too narrow a description for today's agenda. The name Ontario Waste Management Conference more accurately reflects our new way of thinking about waste issues.

We are learning to take a second look at our so-called garbage and see it, not merely as a disposal problem, but as a potential resource.

If mismanaged, our wastes can overwhelm our environment and, ultimately, hamper our ability to flourish as a healthy and prosperous community.

Though society has been slow to accept it, this is not a new concept. An American Indian, Chief Seattle, is on record lecturing the U.S. government on this subject back in 1854. In an eloquent speech, he displayed an understanding of environmental issues that we, with all our scientific and technical expertise, are only now beginning to grasp. "Continue to contaminate your bed," he told the new Americans, "and you will one night suffocate in your own wastes".

Our government is firmly committed to waste management options that divert wastes from disposal and put them to productive use. We are backing that commitment with financial, technical and educational support for broad-based waste management planning.

Of course, the primary responsibility for municipal waste management rests with municipal governments. It is my ministry's job to enforce environmentally sound practices and to dispense financial assistance needed by municipalities to do the job right.

We are seeking to fulfill this role by:

- Focusing on waste reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery -- the 4Rs -- as the preferred steps in managing waste.
- Requiring a much more comprehensive and careful approach to hazardous and liquid industrial waste, with full consideration of the 4Rs options and opportunities.
- Pursuing regulatory changes to encourage progressive waste management.

We are, for instance, undertaking a review of the environmental assessment process to find ways to make the process more effective and efficient for all those who take part.

Phase 1 of our review examines legislative and administrative improvements that can be made in the short term. These proposals will be released in November 1988. Phase 2, dealing with longer term improvements, will be complete in the spring of 1990.

We are further improving the EA process by developing a generic waste management alternative study for use by municipal and private sector waste facility proponents.

Using this generic study of waste management options, municipalities can determine the routes worth investigating for their communities without the expense of first-hand preliminary research. This initiative can reduce the time both municipal and private sector proponents now spend preparing for environmental assessment. We expect to have this study complete by October.

Since June of last year when our new waste management programs were announced, we have also been providing increased support for 4Rs waste management initiatives. Through our Comprehensive Funding Program, we have committed 10.5 million dollars this year to support the reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery of Ontario wastes.

This is an exponential increase from the three-quarter-of-a-million dollar funding provided for municipal recycling the year before I took office, and it symbolizes our government's commitment to ending society's one-way, throw-away mentality.

We are now fine-tuning the complete Comprehensive Funding Program to encourage all municipalities to participate in regional and county waste management plans.

Banding together under a Waste Management Master Plan creates the economies of scale that make it feasible for even the smallest of municipalities to consider 4Rs options in their long-range planning.

A considerable chunk of our resources -- 7.7 million dollars this year -- is devoted to municipal recycling, a waste management option to which this government is deeply committed.

In addition to provincial dollars, municipalities have access to private sector recycling support from the soft-drink industry and its packaging suppliers. The industry has committed itself to a four-year, twenty-million-dollar program to support new municipal recycling projects.

The funding agency, called OMMRI, Ontario Multi-Material Recycling Incorporated, was created by the industry to help it meet its obligations under the carbonated soft drink container regulation our government set out in 1985. The regulations require the soft-drink industry to ensure that 50 per cent of their non-refillable containers are being recycled by November 1988.

I congratulate these firms on the positive manner in which they have chosen to tackle the problem. The entire community benefits when industry puts its talent and resources behind environmental solutions.

The combined public and private sector funding for municipal start-up projects has spurred recycling into a growth industry in this province. We now have more than 70 municipalities involved in multi-material collection projects, with more in the works. Richmond Hill is kicking off its curbside recycling program today, for example.

More than 600,000 homes are currently serviced with curbside, multi-material collection projects.

But this is only the beginning. We are looking forward to the one-millionth Ontario householder receiving a recycling blue box this fall. We are aiming -- as an initial goal -- at a 15 per cent recycling diversion rate province-wide.

We are making progress, but we have a long way to go. We need to build upon the recycling infrastructure now being put in place around the province. I am pleased to note that this is happening.



Windsor/Essex and Guelph, for instance, are exploring the potential of composting, with funding under our municipal waste recovery program. This program offers a third of the cost for facilities to process mixed wastes and produce useful materials like compost and metals. Demonstration projects offering high-potential innovation and break-through technologies can get up to 100 per cent funding.

Taken together, recycling and full application of waste recovery, reduction and reuse have the very real potential to boost our waste diversion from landfill in Ontario to 25 per cent, and in the long term, I believe, to 50 per cent or more.

Because we are serious about achieving this 50 per cent goal, we have designed our support programs to reach beyond the municipalities. Industrial and commercial waste contributes about 50 per cent to municipal waste streams. We are eager to work with any company with good ideas on how to implement industrial 4Rs options and lighten the burden these wastes place on municipal systems.

Under a program established last year, we are prepared to pay up to half the cost of capital and commissioning expenditures, and, as with the municipal program, 100 per cent of costs for innovative and promising research and development projects.

To date we have reviewed or are in the process of reviewing over 80 projects, and we have committed funding to 33 industrial 4Rs initiatives.

In one such project, we are working with industry on developing a system to collect and recycle chlorofluorocarbons used as refrigerants. This one initiative has the potential to reduce the CFC burden on the environment by thousands of tonnes annually. It supports federal and international commitments to protecting the earth's ozone layer by restricting CFC use throughout the world.

I am pleased to announce today, on behalf of Environment Minister Jim Bradley, that the ministry has re-allocated funds to more than double our support this year for industrial 4Rs projects. The number of promising proposals we are receiving requires more than the 1-point-2 million dollars already designated, so we are allocating an additional 1-point-3 million for a funding total this year of 2-point-5 million dollars.

I encourage any of of you with good ideas for waste reduction, reuse, recovery or recycling to make use of the monies available.

We are also working with the Ministry of Education to develop 4Rs materials teachers can incorporate into their school curriculum. For obvious reasons, we focus special attention on promoting recycling in the schools. Ministry staff give classroom lectures. In communities with full recycling programs, we encourage schools to take part in the process by bringing blue boxes and fine paper recycling systems into the schools.

This way kids become educated to the importance of material separation not just for household waste, but as a broad approach to waste management.

This is the kind of thinking my ministry wants to promote. We are looking to 4Rs potential for all aspects of the waste stream, including, or perhaps especially, in dealing with hazardous waste.

At the community level, programs to collect, household hazardous waste have shown success. Last year 23 municipal projects were run at a total cost of 390,000 dollars, of which the province provided some 220,000 dollars. These municipalities diverted some 1,200 waste drums from municipal disposal sites to facilities designed for such wastes. Mississauga's program was so much in demand the city set up a permanent depot for household hazardous wastes.

In other hazardous waste initiatives, we will be holding workshops to consult with the waste management industry and other stakeholders on future hazardous waste regulatory programs.

Our decisions include three major areas:

- First, developing new design and operating standards for hazardous waste management facilities,
- Second, requiring the use of the 4Rs in hazardous waste management,
- And third, ensuring that waste facilities operators provide financial assurance that the public won't be left holding the bag for cleanup and follow-up monitoring should a waste facility close down.

The result of these initiatives will be further regulatory amendments that will continue to upgrade hazardous waste management operations in this province. We want to prevent another Smithville incident from ever again occurring in this province. Costs for site cleanup, decommissioning, proper storage and destruction at the now defunct Chemical Waste Management Ltd., PCB storage facility are estimated to be in excess of twenty million dollars, all of which must be paid for from the public purse.

While we are pleased to have signed Environmental Systems Company (ENSCO) to undertake the cleanup, our government is appalled that the people of this province must foot the bill for CWML's corporate negligence. In the future, we will require that hazardous waste management companies post bonds or credit notes sufficient to cover the cost of follow-up site cleanup and monitoring.

As you know, industrial amendments to Regulation 309 were passed in September 1985. The expanded manifest system, designed to secure the fate of hazardous and liquid industrial wastes from cradle to grave, is now in full effect.

Approximately 15,000 generators of hazardous and liquid industrial waste have been registered to date under the program. In 1987, approximately 1.2 million tonnes of hazardous and liquid industrial wastes were controlled through manifests, up considerably from the 800,000 tonnes controlled in 1986.

We are pleased that industrial haulers are recognizing their reporting responsibilities under regulation 309. The increase in registration is a result of greater awareness of regulatory requirements among generators. This is due in part, I think, to the good work of our Investigations and Enforcement Branch. They are catching and convicting the few bad apples that exist in the hazardous waste hauling business.

With these initiatives, and others in the works, we are well on the way to gaining new control over our waste stream.

We are beginning to make productive use of resources that we previously incinerated or buried in landfill, we are exerting new control over the impact of hazardous wastes on our environment, and we are prolonging the life of our existing waste management facilities.

We may not yet meet the exacting standards of Chief Seattle, but I think he would be pleased with the progress we are making.



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